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# THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM.

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*Each member can send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Members will be careful to write on only one side of the paper and to use black ink.*

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For paragraphs under the word "Ans." the editor is personally responsible.

*February, 1892.*

## QUESTION CLXII.

*What explanations can be offered as to why Madame Blavatsky put her trust in people who afterwards betrayed her confidence and proved to be her worst enemies, in view of the fact that she was able to perceive a person's idiosyncrasies most accurately, and even to foretell his future actions, as is related in numerous instances?*

*Ans.*—As the reason is conceded to have not been ignorance, the only remaining explanations are carelessness or intention. Now any one who knew her would instantly reject the former, so that there remains but deliberate purpose. But what are the reasons for that?

Before, however, stating those that seem plausible, it may be well to qualify the expression "put her trust". There may be great doubt as to whether H. P. B. ever really confided in or sustained actual intimacy with a person afterwards becoming traitorous. She might, and did, have close relations with such, be united with them in literary and other work, be on cordial and friendly terms, and, most assuredly, be ever ready to coun-

sel, encourage, or help; but that she opened up her heart, admitted them to more than a superficial knowledge, in any real sense, "communed with" them, is probably not the fact. Of the four best known cases, one was admitted to her household from charity and kept there for that reason long after her character and machinations were known; the second was accepted as a co-worker so long as that state of things remained possible, but never enjoyed real intimacy with her; the third was admitted to the household, but was kept carefully at arms' length and was never allowed a private interview with her for *even one moment;* and the fourth knew her mainly from correspondence, and was tolerated largely from regard for his wife. Two of the four claimed to reveal damaging facts obtained through close relation to her. Of these two, one proffered forged letters and a story which is simply preposterous to any person with the slightest knowledge of either human nature or H. P. B's.; the other prepared her "facts" and her dates so bunglingly that the "facts" were disproved by herself, and the dates made H. P. B. to have been 7000 miles away from the place of the alleged interview. Two of the four had nothing to show in evidence of her "trust", and what the other two showed was an invention.

But why did she, with her Occult perception, permit any relations at all? Three reasons may be cited—not wholly from mere probability.

The first was that no service to the Cause she had at heart was to be rejected because of a foreseen lapse. With her, all personal considerations were sunk in her function as the leader of a great philanthropic movement, and, if any proffered useful aid to it, that was accepted without care whether she might thereafter be made to suffer, or even whether the profferer might ultimately desert the ranks. The Cause was everything, her personal comfort nothing.

The second was her conviction that she had no right to forestall an offence not yet committed. To decline services for Theosophy apparently sincere because she know the individual's outcome, would be, in effect, to sentence him for what he had not yet done. This might precipitate an evil and so involve her

in a contribution to it, and anyhow would be an unfair use both of Occult knowledge and of official prerogative.

The third was her inflexible adherence to the Law of Karma. She held that Karmic deserts had brought an individual within the range of Theosophic interests, that they had impelled him to some activity therein under herself, and that they entitled him to a free attempt, no matter how it might end. If it induced him to a reform and to sincerity, very well; if it resulted in his deliberate apostasy and hate, that result would be deplorable; in either case the outcome must be from his own volition, acting in the circumstances and under the privileges to which he had Karmic title. With these she would not interfere; the situation was one he had earned, and he must use it freely on his own responsibility.

Of H. P. B's. great wisdom new proof continually appears. Some who were formerly sceptical have now no doubts whatever. Yet to regard her merely as an astute personage, or even as the possessor of Occult powers, would be inadequate. Besides all this she was the commissioned agent of a Hierarchy effecting, at the cyclic period, an invaluable boon to humanity. As such she was bound by all the rules of the Order and the terms of her commission. Copious recognition of Law, unhesitating disregard of self, were among them. That she was faithful in these as in all else we need never question. And if at times her course seemed at variance with what all ordinary judgment and prudence would dictate, we may reflect that, while it is certainly possible that she knew less than her critics, it is also probable that she knew—more.

## QUESTION CLXIII.

*I think I have read (perhaps in H. P. B.) that there have been no new creations, or emanations of Egos from the Infinite, since the beginning. If so, how were they accommodated with personalities, as there were probably but a limited number on earth? And whence come the vast number of incarnating Egos to supply the present large and rapidly increasing number of personalities on earth?*

*K. E. T.*—This question probably refers to the passages in

*Secret Doctrine*, vol. I. pp. 171-173 and 182, where Monads are spoken of in detail, which term the inquirer seems to have confounded with Egos. The phrase "from the Infinite, in the beginning" is also presumably taken to refer to the Monads that, as the old Commentary has it, "slumber in the spheres of expectation" in unconscious inactivity between the Manvantaras.

In dealing with the question at all it must be borne in mind that at the opening of a Manvantara the Monad, as Cosmic Essence, evolutes throughout the three lower force-centres, *i. e.*, the elemental, before the stage of inmetalization is reached, this sub-physical plane being the first wherefrom proceed the kingdoms from mineral to man, on whom is conferred the power of self-consciousness by the Manasa-Putras in the latter part of the Third Root Race. Only at this period therefore can the term *Egos* be properly used, since it is the junction of Manas with the Monad that constitutes the self-conscious entity. We are further told that no fresh Monads have incarnated since the middle point of the Atlantean Race.

Now this rapid sketch of the process of evolution seems to dispose of that part of the question which notes the apparent disproportion of the Monads sent forth, and the limited sphere of their expansion, inasmuch as the rate of advance into human entities, or Egos, is in perfect adjustment with the scale of progress through the inferior stages. It will thus be seen that what is characterized as a "limited supply of personalities then on earth" is strictly equilibrated to the gradual development of the Cosmic Energy, "the tendency toward segregation coming almost to the point" (*vide Five Years of Theosophy*, p. 275).

The second query deals with a part of the subject that is admittedly fraught with considerable difficulty, further elucidation of which would be most acceptable.

What is first to be noted is that since the turning-point of the Fourth Race the influx of Monads has ceased, thus necessitating the reincarnation of the existing number. That this number, large as it is, does not seem large enough to fit into the fact of the growing population of the globe, is really but a superficial objection, since it is an open question among thinking minds whether the population of the earth is truly at the

present era in excess of what it was in long past ages. When the records within the comparatively limited period over which our own historical experience stretches are reviewed, and note is made, to take one solitary instance, of the vast scale of slaughter on which Xerxes' army depended for its triumphs, it would not appear by the almost fabulous figures given but that the population of those periods vied in close rivalry with our own. It has also been a matter of observation that succeeding great cataclysms, as well as after seasons of pestilence when, for example, in the middle ages the Black Death left desolation in its wake, there has always been a noticeable inflow of life corresponding to the sweep of destruction, which fact tends to corroborate the Theosophic theory of the reïncarnating Egos.

As to the limited supply of these we must remember that such a term is merely relative, that limit being within very wide bounds indeed.

## QUESTION CLXIV.

*How can you reconcile the statement of H. P. B. that the last quarter of each century is the starting-point of new activity in connection with the T. S., with the fact that the Christian era had a purely arbitrary beginning, the birth of Jesus, and even that date is said to be incorrect?*

*Ans.*—If it is the fact that a special efflux of spiritual force, coupled perhaps with the appearance of a special messenger, occurs once in every hundred years, such epochs constitute a series regularly occurring in the higher chronology. That is to say, after each interval equivalent to one hundred years as we measure time there comes an extraordinary impulse from the unseen world. Then arises the question, To what point in our chronology does this point in the higher chronology correspond? H. P. B. says that it corresponds with the 75th year in each hundred years of our system. Our system had, as correctly stated, a purely arbitrary beginning, but the question of what point in our system expresses the time when the 100 years in the other begin is in no way concerned with the starting-point of ours. Suppose that the modern world had considered the

birth of Jesus to have occurred 7 years earlier than it has considered it, and had therefore begun its "Anno Domini" reckoning that much sooner, this year would be 1899, instead of 1892. In that case H. P. B. would have said that the 82nd year in each of our centuries was the one coincident with the special spiritual efflux. The Theosophical Society would not have been founded in 1875, but in 1882.

Any system of reckoning, no matter what, must have *some* point to start from, and a convenient division is into centuries. Whether that point was a judicious selection, and whether it accurately indicates an historical event, are matters without bearing on the question of where, in our system, does the beginning of a periodic cycle manifest itself. Mahomedans reckon from the Hegira, and if writing to Mahomedans H. P. B. would have stated the year in each century of that chronology when the spiritual impulse is imparted. The *time* would of course be the same as with us, but the expression of it in years and centuries would be different because of the different starting-points of each system.

## QUESTION CLXV.

*The expressions "subjective" and "objective" are used in such a wide variety of meanings by writers in our magazines and other literature that some of us think a halt should be called and the grounnd covered by these words reviewed. Will the editor, or some person skilled in the use of English philosophical terms, please give us the proper use and meaning of these words?*

*Ans.*—The real meaning is clear and simple, though, like others, these words suffer from handling. "Subjective" thoughts or feelings are those within the mind and of which the mind is the subject, whereas things without the mind, and the objects of its action, are termed "objective". "Inside" and "outside" would concisely state the difference. Thus a "subjective" conviction may have no "objective" reality correspondent, as when a man thinks he sees a form though none is present. Yet a change of relation may make a subjective matter to become objective. For instance, a subjective impression or

train of thought may be held before the mind for examination and analysis, and then it becomes objective, because as an exterior topic upon which the mind works. The above will give clue to all uses.

## QUESTION CLXVI.

*H. P. B. and (I think) others hold that there can be no communication between the living and the dead; but Mrs. Sinnett (Purpose of Theosophy) says that a living person in his astral form can detach himself from his body and communicate with his deparded friends on another plane. How can these statements be reconciled?*

*K. E. T.*—It does not appear from the context in book alluded to (p. 85) that Mrs. Sinnett is referring to others than so-called spiritualistic mediums, who in trance and otherwise are capable of seizing from the lower astral plane some remnants of the disintegrating entities whose lives and thoughts are stamped thereon.

In *Key to Theosophy* (p. 151) we are told that the higher principles of a disembodied mortal can only return into the *objective* plane for a brief period immediately succeeding death.

Mark the stress laid on *objective* plane; for according to *Esoteric Buddhism* (p. 144) it is occasionally possible for living persons to have visions of a subjective nature of some entity in Devachan with whom the bonds of sympathy were sufficiently strong during life to make the attempt successful.

The Devachanee is a being of an intermediate sphere, hence the apperception must be from within, not from without. The sight of the departed mortal on the *objective* plane is a manifestation appealing to the senses, natural or astral, while the flight of the living soul towards Devachan by means of interior access is strictly on the *subjective* plane.

This mode of communication, or rather of approach—for the Devachanee is wholly unconscious of our attempted communion with him—is of extremely rare occurrence. There *is*, however, a certain kind of communication possible in this interior way whereby the up-reaching thought of the mortal blends with that of the Devachanic entity, for H. P. B. tells us that love of

a spiritual nature reaches beyond the grave, and "has a magic and divine potency which reacts upon the living". It is thus that the saying of the grief-stricken King of Israel is justified—"I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me".

## QUESTION CLXVII.

*What is going to hold the T. S. together, if it has no creed, no bond of obligation, and no supreme authority?*

*L. A. L.*—The T. S. depends for its continuance upon something that is stronger than creed or vow, and more compelling than any authority, however vested; it rests upon that inherent craving of the human soul which leads mankind to search after truth and to endeavor to gain understanding. Such an impulse may seem an elusive thing on which to build as a foundation, but in reality it is the impulse which lies back of all evolutionary processes, and in the history of the race we find that it is one of the characteristics which persist. All effort toward advancement is based upon it. Yet truly men have never realized its inalienable element of permanence, for school after school and church after church have been established for the very purpose of holding it fast. They have failed in their purpose because this spirit of search is a living spirit, and it cannot be circumscribed by any bounds. As soon as the mould that was to hold it becomes fixed, the delicate essence evaporates and the form remains an empty husk, or, worse yet, a decaying carcass.

The cry of humanity has ever been—

> "Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
> As the swift seasons roll."

And the work of humanity's saviors has ever involved the breaking down of the mansions of the past. When Moses returned to the land of his fathers, and established, in place of the older and cruder worship of his tribe, a form of religious observance fashioned after the ritual of the Egyptian priesthood, there was the building of a more stately mansion. But it was built with tablets of stone, and when Jesus of Nazareth was born the unyielding walls had narrowed into a dungeon-cell. The Nazarene broke a way out, and his followers stood on the

mount of transfiguration and perceived that God was spirit. But how could the brotherhood hold together without creeds and bonds and authority? Councils and church-builders took the thoughts he had left and encased them in forms until Luther, when he came, found that the "Word of God" was chained to a pillar of stone. He snapped the chain, and for a time the enslaved spirit was free again to follow the path of advancement untrammelled. But again the old story was repeated. The men who surrounded and followed the Reformer did not dare to leave Truth unfettered. To make sure of holding it they caged it about with creeds and dogmas that a later generation found as intolerable as they, in their day, had found the dogmas of their fathers. The spirit that searches for truth lives, and it must of inevitable necessity outgrow any form that is not flexible enough to yield to its own advances. So the question for the humanity of to-day should rather be, How can the T. S., or any body framed for the service of Truth, hold together or stand *if* it fastens itself to creeds or authority?

But in building for the future are we sacrificing the present? Granting that no society can long endure with a hard and fast limit, is it possible to create any society at all now and here, unless it has something definite to hold to? The question is not idle. When one stands at the foot of a mountain the pathway that leads to the top seems sharply defined, but as we climb it blends so intimately with the untrodden field on either side that the eye is confused and the foot falters. So one may say, looking from a distance, that freedom to search for truth is quite sufficient to mark a pathway, and yet, when trying to tread it and finding how imperceptibly it fades off on either side, he may come to gravely doubt whether a society can exist as an organization with no guiding ropes of dogma to keep its party together. Beyond question the guiding ropes would be easier. But if we prepare to stretch them, we must face the certainty that a time will come when they will fatally trip the feet of the climbers. Shall the T. S. do this? Rather let it say: "Look ahead, if the path is confused at your feet. At a little distance the lines are clear again, and your goal—is the summit".

## QUESTION CLXVIII.

*In the Secret Doctrine it is stated that goodness of itself without wisdom will not win Nirvana. At the same time we are told that if we have not opportunity to gain knowledge, yet if we live a life of unselfishness and goodness, we are all right. Please explain.*

*Jno.*—It would be gratifying if those asking questions would give the page of the book quoted. The *Secret Doctrine* is no small book, and its contents are so distributed that it is only with great difficulty that a passage quoted can be found. Its index is also defective. It must be that the questioner refers to a passage on p. 39, vol. I, where there is a statement respecting Nirvana as expounded by the two schools of Buddhistic philosophy, the Hînayâna, or the school of the "Little Vehicle", and the Mahâyâna, or "Great Vehicle": "Both systems . . . inculcate that man may escape the sufferings of re-birth and even the false bliss of Devachan by obtaining wisdom and knowledge which *alone* can dispel the fruits of Illusion and Ignorance." Or is it this? "No entity, whether angelic or human, can reach the state of Nirvana, or of absolute purity, except through æons of suffering and the *knowledge* of evil as well as of good, as otherwise the latter remains incomprehensible" (p. 81, vol. II). On pp. 193-194, *Esoteric Buddhism*, we read: "One mistake Sankaracharya set himself especially to combat was the early Hindû belief that Moksha . . . is obtainable by devout practices irrespective of knowledge of eternal truth. . . . Surely it is plain from the way nature habitually works that under no circumstances will a time ever come when a person, merely by reason of having been good, will suddenly become wise. The supreme goodness and wisdom of the Sixth-Round man, who, once becoming that, will assimilate by degrees the attributes of divinity itself, can only be grown by degrees themselves, and goodness alone, associated as we often find it with the most grotesque religious beliefs, cannot conduct a man to more than Devachanic periods of devout, but unintelligent, rapture."

Useless to quote from other Theosophic books: they are all agreed upon that point.

It is evident that goodness by itself will not procure a diploma in any college. The school-boy's deportment card is not sufficient to pass him the year's examinations; there is required some familiarity with the branches supposed to have been studied by him during the term. How much more so, then, is it a requisite that man should possess wisdom in order to face and solve the mightiest problems of the universe! Nirvana is too high a state to be conceived by mortal mind. The Nirvanee enters a state of consciousness wherefrom the "pairs of opposites" —pleasure and pain, good and evil, light and darkness, love and hate, heat and cold, positive and negative, etc.—are absent; where matter, time, form, and all that makes up our waking consciousness are forever non-existent. The mortal merges into the All; "the dew-drop slips into the shining sea". Unable to define this mystic union with God, missionaries and orientalists have cut the Gordian knot by calling it annihilation. But this makeshift is broken by the doctrine of Para-Nirvana.

While Nirvana may be said to be the legitimate goal of all mankind, yet to attain to that condition, though fully deserving it by many lives of self-sacrifice and suffering, while the "Great Orphan" (humanity) is still struggling in the quagmire of illusion, is not thought by occultists to be a praiseworthy course. H. P. B. refers to it as a state of "exalted selfishness". The Nirmânakâya is one who, having attained Nirvana, yet out of compassion renounces it and chooses the "path of woe", to still aid in the elevation of the race.

As to the latter part of the question: if those who have no opportunity to gain knowledge in this life had been more conscientious in past incarnations, they would now have no cause to complain. It is, most assuredly, a matter of Karma. If they live exemplary lives henceforth, Karma will see to it that they have abundant opportunity for gleaning knowledge in subsequent incarnations. But *Nirvana*—that is another matter. If we reach that point where physical Karma will have no claim upon us in less than seven lifetimes, we will be doing very well,—in fact, breaking the record. A good, unselfish, ignorant person will be "all right" in the next incarnation, perhaps, but not necessarily a Nirvanee.

The questioner has evidently made use of a mantram that elected our present President. In response to the query as to whether there was anything really wrong with the candidate of the big hat, this answer was shouted which will apply equally well to the big-hearted, though ignorant, man of the questioner: "*He's all right!*"

## QUESTION CLXIX.

*It was well said in the Path of April, 1886, that "animals are our fellow-creatures". Should they not, then, be included in the idea of universal brotherhood? (I do not mean by merely not killing them.)*

*Ans.*—Fellowship in creation does not imply equality or even fraternity: it means a common origin, not a common nature. Things emanating from the same source may be on different levels and have different privileges. Brotherhood, on the contrary, inplies generic, perhaps even specific, identity. We are brothers to all human beings because all are of the genus homo: a racer and a cart-horse are brothers because both are of the genus equus: but members of the genus homo and members of the genus equus are not brothers because they belong to different genera. As they have diverse capacities and functions, they cannot have the same rights. A man has the right to personal liberty; this can hardly be said of a horse, which must of necessity be controlled and cared for by man: so that an involuntary servitude which would be an outrage by man upon man is normal and proper by man upon horse. But the right to kindly treatment is one to which animals are entitled, not merely from having the same creator as man, but from having nervous organisms and sentimental capacities subject to pain. Needless pain no right-minded person would inflict. In this sense animals are included in the "idea" of universal brotherhood, that "idea" being sincere good-will. Hence the Theosophical spirit is discordant from unnecessary suffering or death, most of all from that so-called "sport" which finds pleasure in maiming and slaughter as a diversion. A fowling-piece and a Theosophist would certainly seem incongruous.